*John 14:23-29 ~ May 25, 2025*

***Call to Worship:***

Raise a song of joy and gladness before God.

**We will make music and sing God’s praises.**

Sing aloud to God, our strength!

**We will shout for joy to the God who made us.**

Worship God who makes all things new!

**We will celebrate God’s goodness in prayer and praise.**

**\*** ***“O Canada”***

 *O Canada! Our home and native land!*

 *True patriot love in all of us command.*

 *With glowing hearts we see thee rise,*

 *The true north, strong and free.*

 *From far and wide, O Canada,*

 *We stand on guard for thee.*

 *God keep our land glorious and free,*

 *O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.*

 *O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.*

***Welcome and Announcements***

***Prayer of Approach and Confession:***

God of promise and purpose,

we greet you this day with thankful hearts.

As flowers unfurl and buds open,

the beauty of your world lifts our spirits in praise.

As children grow and students prepare to graduate,

their energy and enthusiasm encourage us toward your future.

Your world is full of such variety and detail,

we stand in awe of your creative imagination.

Draw close to us in this hour of worship

and show us the promise and purpose in our own lives.

May we unfurl with your gift of new life,

and move into the future, renewed by the energy of your Holy Spirit.

God of diversity and detail,

the wonders of your creation amaze us.

Yet we confess we often fail to honour its beauty and variety

in the details of our lives.

When voices differ in opinion, we listen to those we agree with.

We fail to honour experience different than our own.

We resist calls to honour the earth as if it were ours for the taking.

Forgive our narrow perspectives.

Open our eyes and our hearts to the pain and perspectives of others,

and renew us all with your healing grace.

***Assurance of Pardon*:**

Jesus said, “My peace I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.” May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Let his forgiveness set you at peace with God and yourself and make peace with one another. Amen.

*Hymn: #314 God is love, come heaven, adoring*

***Anthem***

***Scripture Readings:*** *Psalm 67*

May God be gracious to us and bless us
    and make his face shine on us—[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2067&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14895b)]
**2**so that your ways may be known on earth,
    your salvation among all nations.

**3**May the peoples praise you, God;
    may all the peoples praise you.
**4**May the nations be glad and sing for joy,
    for you rule the peoples with equity
    and guide the nations of the earth.
**5**May the peoples praise you, God;
    may all the peoples praise you.

**6**The land yields its harvest;
    God, our God, blesses us.
**7**May God bless us still,
    so that all the ends of the earth will fear him.

*John 14:23-29*

**23**Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. **24**Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

**25**“All this I have spoken while still with you. **26**But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. **27**Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

**28**“You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. **29**I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe.

***Meditation:*** *“The Peace of God”*

Today is the Kirkin’ Service. Today is a day all about traditions and traditional practices. It’s fitting that on a day marked by tradition we come across the scripture lesson from the Gospel of John. Jesus acknowledges the traditions of the church as being important for faith formation and development. Traditions, when held appropriately help us remember our roots and where we have come as Christians. But Jesus also talks about how traditions have a time and a place. Some traditions last forever and others fade away as the Spirit moves us on along the path of faithful followers.

In today’s reading Jesus is reminding us that the Peace given to us by himself is a peace that will never depart. It’s foundational to our faith and who we are in this world. “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” How many times I have said these very words during some of the hardest days in people’s lives. These words Jesus issued as a reminder to people of the peaceful moments in life. When all seems right with the world. When a sense of calm fills your heart and mind. Peaceful moments that sometimes come at odd times and odd places but moments nonetheless that remind us of our grounding in faith.

The words of our text were spoken on the night before Jesus’ death on the cross. Talk about demands. God’s plan of salvation demanded that Jesus live a perfect life as our substitute. Long days and stressful situations couldn’t find him lashing out at others in anger like we sometimes do. Talk about stress. God’s plan of salvation demanded that Jesus carry the sins of the world on his shoulders. Trying to be all things to all people couldn’t find his patience wearing thin like ours sometimes does. Yet even on the eve of the most violent day of his life, we don’t see him thinking about himself, we see him thinking about others, we see him thinking about us. “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

On that same night Jesus tells us, “in this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” Jesus teaches us not to worry about anything because he will take care of everything. Jesus teaches us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. Jesus teaches us to be kind and compassionate, forgiving others, speaking well of others, taking the words and actions of others in the kindest possible way.

The peace Jesus gives us is more than just wishes to have a nice day. The peace Jesus gives us transcends all human understanding. It came at a price, the price of his life. Though he was one with his Father, he died for our sins and the sins of the world. Nailed to the cross for our mistakes, he endured the pains of hell to give us his peace. Peace that assures us of the full and free forgiveness of sins and eternal life with him in heaven. The peace we have in Jesus assures us that we have obeyed his teachings because his perfect life is now our perfect life. The peace we have in Jesus assures us that we do love him because he loved us first.

On the night before his death, Jesus gives us his peace. Think about everything that happened that night. One of his disciples sold him out for a pocket full of change. Another disciple cursed up and down that he had never known the man much less followed him for three years. From what we’re told, only one stood with him to the very end. Even on the night of his resurrection when they should have been celebrating, they were locked away in fear. Jesus could have appeared to them and shamed them, but rather he appeared to them and strengthened them to serve. Showing them the scars on his hands and side, he said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”

We are fellow disciples of Jesus, no better and no worse than those original disciples, that same peace is ours. So many people in this world are searching for peace in all sorts of places except the one place where it alone can be found, Jesus gives us his peace.

It seems like the older I get, the more I forget. God help me when I’m 90. Sticky notes are helpful if I can remember where I left them. We need reminders in our lives for all sorts of things. And so, we are reminded today of the peace we have in Jesus. His love and forgiveness assures us that we are at peace with God. His love and forgiveness strengthens us to live at peace with those around us. God’s storehouse of love and forgiveness is infinite.

The peace of Jesus is yours as a totally free gift. It doesn’t depend on how well world powers or earthly families and friends are getting along. It cannot be dampened by deceitful words or hurt feelings. It isn’t affected when things don’t always go the way you want them to. That’s what makes the peace of Jesus so amazing, so divine, so worthy of our time and attention. That’s why Paul writes, “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” Yes, let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts by letting the word of Christ dwell in you richly and don’t be surprised when more of those peaceful moments in life come your way. Let this be the tradition we follow. That the love of God and the peace of God is never ending and a source of praise and celebration we continue to hold now and forever.

Amen.

*Hymn: #39 God of mercy, God of grace*

***Invitation of Offering:***

God has created a world of great diversity, full of wonder and potential. Let us honour God’s gifts to us in Christ and in each other as we present our offering in support of God’s purposes in the world.

***Doxology:*** *#830 Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow*

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

***Prayer of Dedication:***

Generous God, we thank you for your gift of new life in Christ Jesus. Receive our gifts this day, and bless each gift and each giver. Use each one to witness to your purposes through our congregation and throughout the world you love, in Jesus’ name. Amen.

***Prayers of the People and Lord’s Prayer:***

Lord, our God,

The earth and all its peoples belong to you.

As we come before you in prayer,

we are painfully aware that the earth itself is at risk,

from the ways your people live on it,

and the conflicts we provoke among each other.

We seek your healing and hope this day

for the earth and all its creatures,

and for your people of every nation.

God of healing and hope,

we pray for peace with justice to emerge in war torn lands,

and in every place of conflict where power struggles put innocents at risk.

We name before you the people and places on our hearts today:

Send your Spirit of wisdom and compassion

to break open the hearts of leaders to work with each other

to protect the innocent and restore order for the wellbeing of all.

May your ways of truth and justice prevail

In every heart and in every land.

God of healing and hope,

We pray for Presbyterian World Service and Development and its partners,

and all groups offering aid and renewal in places

where disaster and conflict have left people at risk.

Support those who have lost homes, families and livelihoods

to find courage to go on

and open hearts of those in safety to share with those in need.

God of healing and hope,

we know that this land we call home faces conflict and pain,

and that communities are divided by deep disagreements.

We pray for healing and understanding to deepen

between Indigenous people and those who settled this land

with no thought for those who already called it home.

Protect those who face racist attitudes and actions in daily life,

and restore dignity and hope to those who have suffered injustice

in a system that benefitted others.

Open our eyes to the creativity and courage in communities

that feel unfamiliar to us,

and open our hearts to build new relationships with each other

and grow closer as neighbours and friends.

God of healing and hope,

We pray for the renewal of your creation

and for the protection of species at risk.

By your Spirit, teach us to change our ways when they are harmful to the earth,

and inspire our ingenuity to find solutions to problems that seem so vast.

God of healing and hope,

We pray for those who know sickness or pain,

for all who live in grief, loneliness or anxiety,

and all who find these uncertain times overwhelming in any way.

By your Spirit, surround each one with strength and love,

and equip us to offer support for those whose lives are woven into ours.

God of healing and hope,

Jesus walks with us day by day to see us through every challenge,

and so we claim the healing and hope he offers in the words he taught us to pray:

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth,
As it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
The power, and the glory,
For ever and ever.
Amen.

\* ***Blessing of the Tartans***

***“****ALMIGHTY GOD, who didst command the tribes of Thine ancient Israel to pitch their tents beneath the standards and the ensigns of their fathers, and who didst set over Thy holy church the sacred banner of the cross of Christ: let the benediction of Thy most gracious favour rest upon all tartans set before Thee here today. Bless all families that claim a tartan as their own, keep them loyal to the noble standards which their tartans represent and faithful in their love and service to Thy Christ and His Kirk; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord unto whom with Thee, O Father, and the Holy Spirit, be all power and majesty, both now and for evermore.” Amen.*

*Hymn: #474 The love of God comes close*

***Benediction:***

Go in peace; God calls us to step out in faith, to follow where He leads

even if what He calls us to do seems impossible. So let’s go from here with courage, trusting in God’s presence and power, and eager to do God’s will.

Now may the LORD keep us and bless us,

May the LORD make his face to shine upon us

and be gracious unto us,

Now and for ever more, AMEN.

***Choral Closing: “Go Now in Peace”***

Go now in peace. Never be afraid.
God will go with you each hour of every day.
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true.
Know He will guide you in all you do.
Go now in love, and show you believe.
Reach out to others so all the world can see.
God will be there watching from above.
Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.